

BL 95.29

ETHICAL MON IN THE LIC COMPARA RELIGIO

BY

STANLEY A. COOPE

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF HEBREW
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

PUBLISHED BY THE WEST LONDON
34, UPPER BERKELEY STREET,

1932.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS

MONOTHEISM LIGHT OF RATIVE GION

BY

COOK, Litt.D.

OF HEBREW IN THE
OF CAMBRIDGE.

LONDON SYNAGOGUE ASSOCIATION,
STREET, LONDON, W.1.

1932.

TWO SHILLINGS.

Left from Journal of Religion

PREFACE.

THESE pages reproduce substantially the lecture entitled "Judaism and Christianity in the Light of Comparative Religion" delivered before the West London Synagogue Association on February 14th. It has been abbreviated or expanded as the case required, and it has been revised throughout in order to adjust it to a title, which, on reflection, seemed more suitable.

I wish to thank the West London Synagogue Association for undertaking its publication in its present form, and would again express my pleasure that I should have had as Chairman (Dr. Claude Montefiore) one who, as joint-editor of the old *Jewish Quarterly Review*, with the late Dr. Israel Abrahams, did so much to further Hebrew and Biblical scholarship in this country, and by his works has enabled Jews and Christians to understand each other as never before.

Mindful of the contribution of Jewish philosophy up to the present day I would seize this opportunity to hope that a less imperfect treatment of the subject of these pages may be undertaken from the Jewish side. For although, on historical and other grounds, I approach the problems of Religion from the Old Testament, my own position as regards both Biblical Criticism and Comparative Religion is an entirely independent one, and all I have been able to do is to suggest how, as it seems to me, if we grasp the significance of the realism of the Old Israelite religion and its Ethical Monotheism, we may be able to handle anew some fundamental age-long questions.

At a time when religious thought, all the world over, is in a state of unrest the Comparative Study of Religions appears to have its own contribution to make. The data of Religion, viewed broadly, lead to what may be called the "Theory of Religion." The spheres of the "religious" and those of the "non-religious" not only cannot be wholly separated, they appear even to interpenetrate, and it does not seem improbable that we have reached a stage in the lengthy history of thought where the Study of Religion may be able to point the way towards a "Theory of Reality"—based on a critical comparison of men's religious and other efforts to reach Ultimate Reality—more effective than any "non-religious" approach. Religion, it is true, does not do so to-day, but it is undergoing development; and whereas our Theology, Philosophy and Science are essentially Western, Comparative Religion not only compels us to search for an attitude that does justice to all the world's religions but, as it seems to me, raises questions which must first be handled before any adequate synthesis can be attempted.

The purpose of these pages may be summed up as follows: (1) On the "Theory of Religion" Man is an integral part of God's Universe and subsists in some

relationship with God: this, at least, appears to answer a great many explicit and implicit religious beliefs and customs, and to throw light upon much that does not fall within the category of "Religion" alone. (2) It is no mere Western bias which enforces the conclusion that along the lines of Ethical Monotheism there has been a profoundly effective development of life and thought which—there is no reason to suppose—cannot, under appropriate conditions, fail to be continued.

Finally, (3) Ethical Monotheism involves the conviction that there is a One and Only God who, as the history of belief shows, must be regarded as both Transcendent and Immanent—though a fresh formulation of these vital complementary attributes is called for. As Supreme Being in the Universe His creative activities are in Man and Nature, two spheres which cannot be held apart; and as our God is an Ethical God, not only are our ideals of social righteousness (i.e., right-ness) involved, but they have a natural place in an ordered Universe in which the universe of Science must also find an intelligible place¹.

Cambridge.

STANLEY A. COOK.

May, 1932.

¹ The subject of Divine Immanence and Transcendence in the Light of Comparative Religion, which is inextricably bound up with the present lecture, is left for another paper. But certain points referred to here may be supplemented by the writer's lecture on The Place of the Old Testament in Modern Research (Cambridge University Press).

ETHICAL MONOTHEISM IN THE LIGHT OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

TO THE immense amount of work that has been done in the Comparative Study of Religions from historical, psychological and other points of view I do not think that it is necessary for me to refer. It is the study of what men have felt to be most real, most true; it is deep-reaching, and very apt to cause impatience, pain or indignation. It cannot be too emphatically stated that the eminently readable and delightful collections of miscellaneous beliefs and practices sooner or later lead to the investigation of more intricate questions of a technical character (e.g., taboos, marriage-customs, social divisions), and that in due course we reach what might be called, not Comparative Religion, but "Comparative Theology,"¹ and the most delicate problems of spiritual religion are involved.

It is impossible to approach the subject without some bias or preconception, which, however, can be tested and corrected as one proceeds: and it is a useful principle to set before oneself the "Golden Rule" of all criticism, namely, to treat the beliefs of others as we would that they should treat our own. No doubt it is not easy to adopt such an attitude, more especially when one is dealing with beliefs and customs which are remote from current modes of thought; and perhaps the most distinctive feature of the present paper is the attempt to take *all* religions seriously, and to consider what results from such an unusual and rather daring method. Certainly, the present conditions in the world of religion justify a candid and critical survey of the subject, even in outline; and it may surely be urged that Religion has been so potent for good and for evil in the past that a study of its salient features should be as thorough-going as one can make it, and that we should be ready to follow the road to which our evidence points.

Perhaps it may clear the ground if I begin by referring to the way in which Christianity itself is, or at least seems to be, embarrassed by Comparative Religion. There are what are often called "Pagan Christs," and it is now freely recognized that "Glimpses of a Saviour"² can be found in many parts of the world. Of this type of belief there are many varieties, and it appeals to many different types of mind, east and west. I have been told that the Indian will say to the Christian: "your Christ whom we call Krishna," and *vice versa*; and in China a perfectly literal Buddhist adaptation of a very well-known Christian hymn has been heard:³ The man Gautama, the human Buddha, was deified;

¹ A useful book under this title was published by J. A. MACCULLOCH (*Methuen*, 1902).

² The title of the ninth chapter of Macculloch's book; cf. also W. ST. CLAIR TISDALL, *Christianity and other Faiths* (1912), Chapter xi.

³ "Buddha loves me, this I know,
For the Sutras tell me so,
Little ones to him belong,
They are weak, but he is strong,"

cited by the REV. W. E. SOOTHILL, Professor of Chinese, Oxford, in *The Modern Churchman*, vol. xii. (1922), 390. He remarks that Neo-Buddhism has adopted Christian prayers, etc., and that the subject demands sympathetic study.

and in eastern religions there are theological problems which, *mutatis mutandis*, are so closely parallel to those in Christianity that they raise the profoundest questions of the psychology of Religion, and the Spiritual Reality that lies behind. But although this and other evidence that has been collected might appear to deprive Christianity of its originality and its uniqueness, the Christian will feel that beneath the formal parallels are essential differences; even as the Jew is conscious of a qualitative difference when Comparative Religion proceeds to compare and co-ordinate the beliefs of Judaism, Islam, Brahmanism, and other forms of theism.⁴

My remarks this evening may be conveniently grouped under twelve heads; but all will turn upon the importance of understanding afresh the full significance to-day of the Old Testament and its Ethical Monotheism. I start, then, with some introductory observations upon the interconnection of the Old Testament and the New.

From time to time the religious value of the Old Testament for Christendom comes up for criticism; but hitherto, at least, there has been a characteristic English or British tendency, not merely to uphold an undivided Bible, but to lay special store upon the Old Testament.⁵ In times of wrong and injustice we turn to the Hebrew conception of righteousness. In times of war, change and revolution the prophets and psalmists inspire us. In times of grave stress, and perplexity, we may feel with the writer of Isaiah lxiii. 19 that we have become as those over whom God's Name had not been called. Or again, we talk of the "Divine Discipline of Israel," but we may have to learn that the Western World has yet to ask itself what this means for it. And finally, if we are tempted to dwell too proudly upon the absolute superiority of our religion, it is the Hebrew prophet Amos (iii. 2) who warns us of the danger of spiritual pride.

To-day we place the Old Testament upon the background of ancient history and religion. We follow its contents to Daniel and the Maccabean age, to the Wisdom Literature and Ben Sira. The apocryphal and apocalyptic literature carries us insensibly into the Christian period, even as we may read Josephus and are suddenly aware that the Christian drama has begun, or we trace Palestinian archaeology and excavation back and down through Arab, Byzantine, Roman, Hellenistic, Jewish and Pre-Israelite periods, and are not conscious of any gaps.

Again, in the New Testament there are the strongest Jewish elements (e.g. *Luke* i. *Epistle of St. James*), and in the Apocalypse or Revelation of St. John we seem to have the last traces of archaic half-Jewish, half-pagan ideas of a distant past, yet in harmony with the archaeological evidence for the persistence of many varieties of belief in Palestine. In fact, it is not enough to say that

⁴ So also in early Palestine the syncretistic tendencies which would equate the God of Israel with Marduk of Babylonia, Khnum of Egypt, or the Greek Zeus would and did cause searching of heart.

⁵ Even the strange and entirely unhistorical Anglo-Israelite belief that the Anglo-Saxons are the remnants of the Lost Tribes ("Isaac's sons") may, psychologically, have its basis in a genuine feeling that the Old Testament has a unique significance for this country. At all events, in Comparative Religion it is frequently necessary to go beneath the crude external forms of beliefs and customs and ascertain—if possible—their psychical foundation.

so-and-so must be *either* Jewish or Christian; it may be just broadly "Palestinian." In the Fourth Gospel and in Paulinism there is more that is Jewish—or perhaps I should say "Palestinian"—than has often been thought; and it is now more clearly recognized that the evidence for Hellenistic influences in the New Testament must not obscure the extent to which it is, in a sense, the ideological sequel of the Old Testament.

The religious development behind the Old Testament and the New is a complex one; but in the characteristic teaching of the great prophets we recognise a profound religious reformation. It is upon the significance of these prophets that the so-called "Higher Criticism" of the Old Testament may be said to turn. The land of the Bible was never, or at least rarely, isolated; and it is not easy to determine all the factors in the development. Now, to-day, a man's social philosophy may be stimulated and shaped in reaction *against* a Communism with which he has no sympathy; also Roman Catholicism in its history betrays the presence of a Protestantism which it repudiates. Similarly, when we study the Bible, we seem to see traces of reactions and protests; and the prophets are of lasting historical interest for their fight against beliefs and practices which they—and surely rightly—felt to be contrary to spiritual religion. It was the fight of good *versus* bad religion; and it is on this account that the Old Testament is of permanent value, and that one must deprecate any endeavour to maintain that throughout, from first to last, every constituent element is of equal spiritual, ethical or historical worth.

Now although we owe Ethical Monotheism to Israel, there are those who find the Old Testament a stumbling-block because of its "lower" elements. But this is to ignore both the ethical theism of the prophets and the simple piety of the psalmists. To contrast the Old Testament with the New is to contrast the religious vicissitudes of a virile and self-conscious people over centuries of stirring history with the religious idealism and programmatic aspects of incipient Christianity. It is to forget both the speedy rise of abuses in the Christian Church and the dark pages in the history of Christendom when the new religion came out into the world. After all—implicit or explicit—the history of Christendom manifests Christian conceptions of its God as truly as the Old Testament has set forth in black and white the lower as well as the higher levels of Religion. And when it is said that Christianity unfortunately came under the evil influence of Psalms of Vengeance, the cruel extermination of witchcraft, and so forth, it is the more lamentable that the ethical and humane teaching of the Old Testament was ignored and that men dwelt more upon the sternness of the God of Israel than upon His compassion and righteousness. Finally, when it is candidly realized that it was human nature that men should seize upon the cruder and less ethical aspects of the Old Testament, it was no less human nature so many centuries earlier which accounts for the presence of those unlovely elements to which our attention is often directed⁶.

In general, it is necessary to recognize both that there has always been bad as well as good religion, and that there has been development in the history of

⁶ cf. C. G. MONTEFIORE: the God of the Old Testament was "merciful, compassionate, forgiving. In a word, a moral God, though not yet, to our thinking, completely moralised" (PEAKE, *One Volume Commentary*, p. 618).

religion. How readily retrospect will arouse the conviction that there has been an advance needs no telling. The religion of Israel was certainly felt to be an advance beyond the old pre-Israelite religion, and Christianity an advance beyond the Old Testament; Protestantism will feel that it has advanced beyond Medieval Catholicism; and, if we were to go farther afield, we should find that Islam believes that it has taken up the figure of the Founder of Christianity and gone beyond. As a matter of fact, two different and contradictory types of feeling prevail: the one that the most recent stage of a religion marks an advance upon its predecessors, and the other that the older the religion the purer, and that at times there must be a return to that earlier stage before it became contaminated and began to deteriorate.⁷ A judicious treatment of the history of religion must take into account the facts that point to some progressive development as also those that suggest a "return," since it not infrequently happens that instead of a "return," old elements reappear in a new form.

The point I have tried to make is a three-fold one: the inseparability of the Old Testament and the New, the admitted facts of "lower" and "higher" elements in all Religion, and the historical process in its development. My second point concerns the place of Christology within Theism. Christianity looks back upon certain great creative movements both within the Bible and outside it (e.g., the Reformation). The rise of Christianity can be viewed as a great prophetic movement, and one can understand better John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul, when one comes to them fresh from a study of their earlier predecessors, the Hebrew prophets. Their uncomprising outspokenness reminds one of, let us say, a Jeremiah on the one hand, and Protestant Reformers on the other. How deep-reaching are all such movements! How Man is thrown back upon God! Man is clay in the potter's hands; God has perfect freedom; Men has no rights before Him; all are unprofitable servants! There is a thorough-going theism which is more Hebraic or Semitic than Hellenistic or Greek.

St. Paul's sternness and his attitude to the Torah remind us of Jeremiah and the prophets. Yet, like even Jeremiah, Paul is at heart an Israelite. He believes that the restoration of the Jews will be the consummation of God's universal purpose, he thus implies that there could be a synthesis (*Romans xi*). A new shoot has been grafted on to the old stock; but there must be no undue exaltation, for it could easily be rejected. The line of evolution—as we might say—could again take another direction.⁸ Paul has a very significant conception of the historical development of Religion, though it is not easy to say precisely how it is to be interpreted. Indeed, his philosophy of history, as it may be called, is a remarkable one: through the first man, Adam, sin entered the world; and through Christ, the Second Adam, there is redemption. Adam, in Luke's genealogical table, is a son of God—it is a reminder that the human race is of Divine origin, and was probably added for the sake of Gentile readers.⁹

⁷ The theory of Primitive Monotheism reflects the second type. For a discussion of its value, see the present writer in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, xxxiii. (1931), 1-17.

⁸ SANDAY and HEADLAM (*Commentary on Romans*, p. 327): "any virtue that (the heathen) may have comes by no merit of their own, but by virtue of the stock to which they belong . . . it will be a less violent process to cut off branches not in any way belonging to the tree than it was to cut off the original branches."

⁹ PLUMER, on Luke iii. 38.

Through Christ, our Brother (*Hebrews* ii. 11), Man is brought into a new relationship of sonship with God. Moreover, just as Jesus came to bring in the Kingdom of God, so Christ will ultimately hand the sovereignty over to God, who is the original source (*I Corinthians* xv. 24). If, then, the Law had been, as Paul calls it, a "pedagogue" (*Galatians* iii. 24, 25), it was the function of Christ, too, in a sense, to conduct men up to God's rule. In other words, Paul's philosophy of the history of religion culminates, not in a Christology, but in a Theism. And here the Old Testament and the New are at one, in that from Genesis to Revelation the entire history of Man—past, present and future—is placed within the creative work of a Transcendent God who is above both Israel and the Messiah, a God who, as the Jew and the Christian respectively hold, works out His purposes through them.

Judaism and Christianity, each in its own way—and very different ways—recognize the Immanence and Transcendence of a One and Only Ethical God; and we have next to ask, Is this solely a "religious" doctrine?

The extraordinary Realism of the old religion of Israel is my third point. It is often said that Semitic religion is "this-world-ly" in contrast both to certain "other-world-ly" aspects of Christianity and to the pantheism and quietism of Indian religion. The Semitic religions are characterised by remarkable and intense extremes.¹⁰ We admire the vivid realism and the sublime idealism of Israel, her restrained and sober mysticism: God and this His world are alike tremendously real. Her ethical monotheism made her unique and eternal. A Jewish anthropologist has recently argued, and rightly, that monotheistic or monotheising tendencies can arise anywhere and at any age.¹¹ This can be admitted. There is no special merit in monotheism as such. Religion in itself can be good or bad: it is the social and moral setting and its continuity that make the difference between the admittedly impressive subjective significance of religious and mystical experience and its more objective worth. Inevitably and justly we contrast the ethical monotheism which arose in Israel with what we also find in the old Semitic and other religions: superstition, cruelty and coarseness. We need a wide term to embrace our evidence, and we may speak of the "numinous."¹² When, therefore, we take a very wide view of the "numinous," we have before us religion that is spiritual and unspiritual, moral and immoral; mysticism that is sublime or degrading; magic, spiritism, occultism, and so forth. All "numinous" experiences and convictions are subjectively very real and authoritative, yet they vary enormously in their ethical, social or intellectual fruits. The problem of good and bad religion is an exceedingly difficult and delicate one, and our attitude to it will be shaped by our personal religion. If, then, we are convinced of the supreme value of the effectiveness of

¹⁰ See the *Cambridge Ancient History*, i, 194 sqq., and W. ROBERTSON SMITH, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 425: "*corruptio optimi fit pessima*"; the very tone of mind which makes Semitic heathenism the most hideous of false worships enabled the Hebrew nation to grasp with unparalleled tenacity and force the spiritual idea of Jehovah."

¹¹ PAUL RADIN, *Monotheism among Primitive Peoples* (the Arthur Davis Memorial Lecture for 1925); *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (1927), ch. xviii.

¹² The term, first coined by RUDOLF OTTO, *The Idea of the Holy*, is now in frequent use. It is here employed of the religious, mystical and all related data which belong to the realm of the supersensuous and cannot be classified under definitely non-religious terms.

that religious development which can be traced back to the Old Testament, Ethical Monotheism should be our criterion.

Yet, at the same time, should we not have to confess that the old monotheism, the old realism of the religion of Israel, is not so real to us to-day with our vastly greater store of positive knowledge? To put it more generally, we think we understand the immediate reality of the world of space and time; also there is ethical reality, in the sense that without morality, social order and brotherliness, we should sink back and fall below the level of *homo sapiens*. But spiritual reality is on another footing. We may have the firmest belief in a Deity; but can we to-day co-ordinate Spiritual Reality with the rest of our knowledge, whether ordinary or scientific? In other words, can one replace the old religious realism by a new one?

Our mathematicians make all sorts of postulates and then proceed to work out the consequences. Let us, in turn, be no less daring. Let us assume that the world's religions *do* reveal, or involve, or imply, or suggest Something that is really real and actual. And my fourth point is this: we know of "theories" of Religion, can we, with the help of Comparative Religion, discover what I may call "the Theory of Religion?" What has Religion to say for itself?

Such a task would be more ramifying than Frazer's *Golden Bough*, indeed it might be difficult to see the Golden Wood for the Golden Trees; yet I venture to think we could condense our results into a sentence. If we take a world-wide view of Religion, or rather of the numinous, we should find that the evidence would fall into three main groups, and that it would point to an exceedingly close and vital relationship between Man and the world or universe, in so far as it is understood by him; between Man and gods, spirits and the unseen world, and between the latter and the Universe. This triangular relationship: God, Man and the Universe, is more or less clearly implied or expressed in very many different ways, which are for the most part quite independent of each other; they can be classified intelligibly; and there is a fundamental relationship between them just as there is throughout the world of organic life.

I have space to make only a few miscellaneous remarks by way of justification. That Man is organic to Nature needs no proof; and all deeper thinking has led him to Nature or to Nature's God. Man's relationship to the world and that of the gods are often found to be parallel or analogous; thus men and gods are *over*, or in some sense *in* nature or part thereof: they are now, so to say, the electrician and now electricity. There are cosmic or nature gods, cosmic or nature human powers. It is true there is a gulf between gods and men, but it is readily bridged; and mysticism and personal religion attest the profoundest experiences of communion and union, though not of identity. Often the god is father, or husband, or uncle, or even brother; and there is abundant evidence for a divine or super-natural element in ordinary human birth. God, says the Koran, comes in between a man and his heart, he is nearer to a man than his neck-vein; and just as the body is called the city of Brahma, so to Paul it is the temple of God (*I Cor.* iii. 16). In Indian thought, he who knows himself knows the Universe. The Chinese sage Mencius and Clement of Alexandria agree in saying that he who understands his own nature will understand God. Deeper

reflection upon God and Man, and the higher types of anthropomorphic religion—as e.g., in Judaism—lead to more intimate conceptions of both the nature of God and the nature of Man. In ways untold we meet with this triangular relationship: God, Man and the Universe, in theology, philosophy, and rudimentary belief and ceremonial.

All the religions make extraordinary claims, and one may, perhaps, sum them up provisionally in the very ancient and famous Indian formula, *tat tvam asi*, "that art thou." The ultimate identity of the Self or Ego and the Universe or its God, of Man's soul and the Universal "Soul of all things."¹³ This formula, it is true, is pantheistic; but if we take it as the "Theory of Religion" that Man is, *in some sense*, one with God and His Universe, I venture to believe that we can co-ordinate and understand in large measure the data of Religion. *Tat tvam asi*: the ultimate, or actual, or potential, or conditional relationship—Man's cosmic existence.

I turn now to the fifth point: the bearing of this upon our thought and our ways of thinking.

We draw lines between Man and Nature, between God and the world. But the concept of "Nature" is far from primitive. In Indian thought we find one single order: one law runs through man and nature; and this law is sustained by Varuna, a wonderfully fine ethical god, comparable only to Israel's conception of her own national deity.¹⁴ We have formed the concept of Nature by a process of abstraction and, having abstracted all that belongs to Man and God, we proceed to comment upon Nature's indifference; it is as though we placed apart in a large hall the blind, deaf and dumb, and then proceeded to comment upon the indifference of our audience! Our isolation of "Nature" is quite a secondary process.

Next, however firm may be a man's belief in a Supreme Being, it is surely difficult to conceive what were His attributes before Man appeared, or before there was life; as little could ancient Israel conceive her God to exist without His own people. Yet the religious consciousness feels that God is First and Last; in Him we live and move and have our being. Because of this faith the ultimate dissolution of this mysterious Universe means little or nothing, and that grand old idealist, Emerson, in turn, declared that he did not fear the end of the world. This is due not merely to religious faith, but to the ultimate validity of certain personal experiences and convictions; these are not kept apart in some watertight compartment, as it were, but are above and behind a man's knowledge of and reasoning about this world of space and time. There is, in truth, a certain fundamental unity of consciousness: the same man having different sorts of experience at different times; but the difficulty has always been to relate them to one another.

In the religious growth of a man, when he comes to acquire religious con-

¹³ cf. R. W. FRAZER, *Indian Thought Past and Present* (1915), pp. 53, 71, 94; J. ESTLIN CARPENTER, *Theism in Medieval India* (1921), index p. 549 (under "That art Thou"); SYDNEY CAVE, *Living Religions of the East* (1921), p. 29 ("the psychic and the cosmic principles are one").

¹⁴ cf. CAVE, *op. cit.*, p. 19 sq.

victions, he does not launch out and merely "add" to his knowledge. When a man learns a new language and for the first time enjoys Shakespeare, Goethe or Dante, we may distinguish what is "additive" (e.g., the new language) from the "qualitative" effects of his new acquaintance with the great classic. Much more marked are the "qualitative" effects of Religion, and we ask, how are we to formulate the process? Religion asserts that God knows us before we know Him, He chose us first, and He made us for Himself, in His likeness. The data of religion and mysticism; the common belief that there is a supernatural factor in human birth,¹⁵ and the *a priori* or transcendental nature of the processes of religious development combine to supplement what I call "the Theory of Religion": Man is part of a vaster existence or shares in a vaster life before he consciously is religious, or has any deliberate conception of God.¹⁶

Accordingly, instead of supposing that in religious development something "new" emerges—that there is "emergent" evolution—it might be better to say—and not in the case of Religion alone—that the individual gains a new and heightened or transformed consciousness of his environment, his world of activity and his place in the Universe. In such experiences a man often seems to repair a sundered relationship, to resume unity with a Reality of which he had always formed part, to return to Heaven which is his home.¹⁷ Indeed, it is through the prevalence and persistence of experiences of this type that we may explain the rudimentary ideas of rebirth, reincarnation, and the like; and while to Tennyson pre-existence was a ground for belief in existence after death—death leading to a return to a pre-existent state; others have felt that the idea of immortality necessarily involves that of pre-existence. In other words, the experience of becoming an integral part of that which was already in existence is interpreted as though the actual individual himself had pre-existed.¹⁸

I venture to think that I can now more decisively make my sixth point, namely, that man's non-religious as well as religious modes of life and thought are influenced unconsciously by his place in the Cosmos or his relationship with God. If we agree that God knows Man before Man knows God, we do not mean by "God" a solely spiritual reality, over *there*; we mean, rather, that Man has some deeper consciousness of his place in the Universe, of his relationship to God who is in the Universe, and not apart from it. This, at least, seems to follow from a study of the influence of a man's religion upon the non-religious spheres of his life and thought and the reverse, and from the interconnexions between religious and non-religious though closely related experiences (e.g., Religion and Art). Accordingly, mental development will be due, not merely to ordinary social intercourse but to what may be called a cosmic relationship. "The objective mind that is at once immanent in and dominant over its several members"¹⁹ will be that of which the whole human society itself is part. In any case, the relation between the spheres of the "religious" and the "non-reli-

¹⁵ *Qiddushin* 30b: "There are three partners in every human birth—God, father and mother," cited by I. ABRAHAMS, *Studies in Pharisaism*, ii. 150.

¹⁶ cf. TENNANT, *Philosophical Theology*, i. 326: there may well have been *rapprochement* between Man and God, before Man has religious experiences.

¹⁷ The Old Testament conception of "return" to God will at once occur to every reader.

¹⁸ McTAGGART, *Some Dogmas of Religion*, chap. iv. cf. TENNANT, ii. 257

¹⁹ JAMES WARD, *Realm of Ends*, p. 129 sq.

gious'' is such that Religion must find a place in one's conceptions of Reality and of that Universe of which the universe of the scientist is only part.

WILLIAM JAMES, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* (p. 389), suggested that Hegel's idea of a perfected Being was due to the prominence in the philosopher's consciousness of mystical moods. Also EDWARD TYLOR (*Primitive Culture*, 4th ed., i. 497 sq.) found a remarkable connexion between the doctrine of ideas of the Greek philosopher Democritus and the current notions of spirits; he speaks of his "decanting into his metaphysics a surviving doctrine of primitive savage animism." Again, CORNFORD (*From Religion to Philosophy*) demonstrates at length the close connexion between the religious and the philosophical thought of early Greece; and other evidence could be adduced to illustrate the relation between typical religious, philosophical and other reactions to the "outside" world.²⁰ The medieval ego-centric conceptions of Man and the Universe are so far justified that we now learn that the earth may be unique, and that we appear to be recovering a sort of Neo-Copernican cosmology.²¹ Be this as it may, such ideas are explicable if men are not isolated units here and now, but are in some sense one with God and His Universe, and through this relationship construct each his own ideas of a Universe with himself as centre. That is to say, man's relationship with God or with the Universe makes him think, not merely as an earth-born individual of a few decades, confined in space and time, but also as in some sense a cosmic or universal being. We live in a world of space and time; but when we think "religiously," it is in a sphere wherein ideas of time and space have no relevancy. Indeed, are not our problems of Subject and Object, of the One and the Many, of ourselves here and now and the so-called "external" world, so hopelessly complex simply because we exist in two worlds or spheres of which that of space and time is only one?

But one must not forget that Comparative Religion uses somewhat indifferently the terms God or the Universe, and Religious, Mystical or Numinous. Furthermore, not only is there both good and bad religion, but one cannot ignore the fact that there are men of the finest ethical and moral character who seem to have no need for "religion," no sense of it—at least in the conventional use of that word. A complete Theory of Religion must certainly take into account not only bad religion, but also righteous living that is—or appears to be—without religion. Many will agree that the ethical integrity of a man who has no "religious sense" is decisively better than bad religion; moreover, theism, as such, certainly appears to give a special, more intense, and more personal shape to a man's life than non-theistic convictions; and finally, the ethical theism of the Old Testament and its fervid realism, have, if we accept the verdict of history, surely given a direction to the development of human life and thought absolutely more effective than other vaguer and ethically defective forms of Theism.

Now the essential feature of the ethical monotheism of the Old Testament is the absolute righteousness of God: He is not arbitrary, capricious or untrustworthy; He is righteous, and is at once Immanent and Transcendent. This

²⁰ For example, PATTISON MUIR, *Mind*, 1913, pp. 48-61; cf. the present writer, in *Essays presented to Wm. Ridgeway*, p. 406 sq. (on the evolution of primitive thought).

²¹ J. NEEDHAM, *The Great Amphibion*, pp. 61, 78.

brings me to the seventh point: the God who is both in and behind all history and the Universe.

Let us recall, first, the superb faith in God, even though He may seem helpless, indifferent, or even hostile: one thinks, for example, of Daniel iii. 17 sq. (even if our God does not save us we will not worship thy gods), or Habakkuk iii. 18 (in spite of calamities and though earth's blessings fail, "yet will I rejoice in the Lord"). Not only some conspicuous words of Job (e.g., xvi. 18-22, xix. 25-27), the whole drama of the book leads on to the conviction in the God who is behind the God of man's experience and calls up the saying in the Koran (ix. 119), "there is no refuge from God but to Him."²²

Next, the disasters of the Exile which might have seemed to show that God had forsaken Israel actually brought the grander perceptions of His Reality which make the "Deutero-Isaiah" (Isaiah xl. sqq.) the high-watermark of Old Testament religion. Though He might appear to be remote or negligible (as in Zephaniah i, 12), He was near at hand and separated only by the breadth of men's thoughts. And finally, when the prophets attacked the religion of their day, and went behind history, the temple and the culture to the God of the Universe, we perceive the vital fact of *all* development, religious and other: that the thoughts, ideas and concepts which at one time are felt to lead to a goal, at another time are found to be a hindrance. The study of the world's religions, viewed broadly and dynamically, unmistakably points to the fact that there is Something, some greater and still transcendent Reality, behind or above the particular religion which at one time has made for progressive development, but at another is below the aspirations of the prophet or the reformer.

The implications of this are evident. Our most earnest thoughts by no means always lead us direct to our goals: the important fact is that we constantly make this discovery for ourselves. Nor has Theism long remained stationary. We human beings have not reached the limits of our own personal development, nor can we sound the depths of Divine Personality, or discover the last secrets of a Universe which is in the hands of One, who will be what He will be, but whose guidance will continually be found to be "righteous"—that is, if we take our stand on Ethical Monotheism.

The Deity transcends our knowledge of Him, and our Ego, or Self, transcends us, imperfect beings that we are, with our religion or philosophy of the day. By reason of our cosmic or theistic existence, that is, in or through God—at least on the Theory of Religion—and because we are also creatures of here and now, in space and in time, there will always be contradictions and paradoxes in our syntheses. Our thinking will give us the *road* to Ultimate Reality, but not that Reality itself in the fullness of the Truth and Beauty and Majesty of a Transcendent God. Can Man see God and live?

If this seems to take us back to the simple faith of the Old Testament, it is to the *spirit* of Ethical Monotheism rather than to the *letter*; for our intellectual and other problems to-day are vastly more complex than those of ancient Israel.

²² See the *Cambridge Ancient History*, vi. 192; and cf. Box, *Judaism in the Greek Period* (*Clarendon Bible*, vol. v; 1932), p. 130: appealing from man's God to God's God.

What I have said on Divine Transcendence and the *Ultimate Reality* leads me to my eight point—the roads to reality, in particular, Man's ideas of gods, spirits, angels, and intermediaries. A whole chapter or series of chapters of Comparative Religion must be condensed into a few words.

Speaking generally, we may say that gods, spirits and the like arise from *personal* experience or feelings of relationship. But they also answer to spiritual, moral, intellectual and logical needs. Frequently the gods are causes—e.g., of rain or crops—and as such they do not necessarily stand in any relationship to man. Often they are grounds of existence or of persistence, principles of unity and of continuity.²³ At one end of our scale are the personal gods and other spiritual beings; at the other are necessities of thought—where and how shall we draw the line?²⁴

No one can deny the profound value of the saints in Mohammedan or Roman Catholic communities; and while the Virgin Mary of Christendom is the successor of the Mother-Goddesses of old—though the ideas are heightened by Christian idealism—in the East the need for a female deity is supplied by the figure of Kuan-Yin, who is derived from a male deity. The Babylonian Ishtar was also a Compassionate Mother, to whom is addressed one of the finest of Babylonian hymns; and while the monotheistic Israelite placed his Deity above sex—though finding in him all the tenderest attributes—among his neighbours the deities were sometimes bi-sexual in theory or were so represented in art.²⁵

Again, consider the "Christ-idea" and the parallels: e.g., the earlier Marduk, Osiris, Attis and Adonis, and the later Krishna, Buddha and Amitabha. Some may have no historical foundation, and the figure of Krishna has been admittedly cleansed.²⁶ The Jesus of history, already beautiful in our oldest sources, has become One in whom Christians will always find an accessible and realisable centre of the loftiest ideals. But while we do not forget that these have an Old Testament ancestry, He has also become an embodiment of social and other ideas which distinguish modern thought rather than the Founder of Christianity Himself.

When we read of the "God of the Old Testament" and the "God of the New," we understand that the writer has in mind two types of doctrine or belief

²³ cf. the Roman *genius*, the permanent principle of highly organised institutions (W. WARDE FOWLER, *Roman Ideas of Deity*, p. 21 sq); and for ideas of "corporate spirit," *esprit de corps*, etc., see H. STURT, *The Principles of Understanding* (1915), p. 174.

²⁴ The varying orthodox and unorthodox views of the Memra and other Jewish terms find analogies elsewhere (see J. ABELSON, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature*). To the criticism that God Himself may be a projection, a mental necessity, or focus, it may be replied that Man persistently finds a *Personal Reality* beyond those inherited and current conceptions of God that are found to be inadequate, and that he demands this in place of any *Impersonal Process* or Principle. Moreover, on intellectual grounds, the (empirical) Self seems equally elusive, and it is not surprising that Buddhism could argue away its immortality; but his own personal development is a guarantee that no individual can claim to have reached the limits of his growth, and the deeper experiences can convince man that in some sense he "transcends" all phenomena, and the most logical of his intellectual constructions.

²⁵ See the writer's note in W. R. SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, 3rd ed., p. 516; and cf. VINCENT and DHORME, *Revue Biblique*, 1926, p. 357.

²⁶ CAVE, *op. cit.* p. 46.

concerning the Supreme Being, even though his wording sometimes implies that there are two distinct deities. Nor do we suppose that corresponding to the many local Madonnas venerated by the Roman Catholics or the local Elijahs of the Near East there are as many Spiritual Beings. It is no less difficult to conceive that there exist *all* the spirits, saints and other spiritual or supernatural beings in which men of all ages have genuinely believed. Sometimes a historical figure lies behind them, but not always; and all that can be said is that our nature is such, or the nature of the Universe is such, that Man can seek for and find these supersensuous beings within his private world, whatever be their authentic background in human history.

Here let me quote the Archbishop of York, when he says that "the One God of Heaven and Earth used the figure of Yahweh, the God of Sinai, as the means of revealing Himself to a particular nation."²⁷ But if so, is it not more widely true? Has not God elsewhere used figures of contemporary belief as the medium for His revelation of Himself? Comparative Religion is forced to recognise the noble and fine attributes often attributed to "pagan" gods: the Babylonian Sin and Shamash, the Indian Varuna, and many another. If any attempt is to be made to understand the problems brought by such facts, only from the standpoint of Ethical Monotheism does it seem possible that this can be done. Is not Comparative Religion studying the ways in which the One and only God has let Himself be apprehended? If so, how far may one go along this line of thought?

There can be no doubt that in their deities, saints and intermediaries men have everywhere found consolation, companionship and inspiration: they have led men to a goal—as "pedagogues," shall we say, using St. Paul's word? Yet, just as the Jew will have no divine figure between him and his God, so the Protestant rejects the cult of intermediaries, saints or Madonnas. A theist, too, might even say that though the Christian believes that God has revealed Himself in Christ, yet certain types of Christianity seem to keep men away from a fuller knowledge of God. And did not the Prophets find it necessary to lead the people from the cult and the temple and the history to the God who was behind the religion of their day?

If we believe that the Supreme Being of the Universe is the Ultimate Reality, Comparative Religion forces us to follow out the implications of our data. Thus the question will arise whether we suppose that the dead, especially the saintly, the precious and the powerful, can really exercise any influence over or on behalf of the living. We may agree that God could use them, or that He could use our ideas of them—and indeed of all supersensuous beings, whatever their human origin—and we may agree that such ideas can be developed, purified and heightened. But, on the Theory of Religion, Man in his life-time is already in some relationship with God, and, if so, may he not already be used by Him? When dear and valued lives leave us "we doubt not that for one so true, there must be other nobler work to do"; but Ethical Monotheism cannot speculate whether the dead, *of their own right*, or *in and of themselves* have any influence upon the world of the living. This is not to deny that it is so; it is to say that our conception of Ultimate Reality and of the road thereunto will shape our attitude to all theories of transhuman reality.

²⁷ DR. WILLIAM TEMPLE, *Mens Creatrix* (1917), p. 334.

In our search after Reality from the human side we are speedily at a loss. We cannot lay our finger upon transhuman reality; for although the Positivist or the Sociologist may find it in Society as a whole, or in Humanity, real or ideal, we cannot ignore the fundamental relationship between Man and Nature, and, proceeding in this way, where shall we find reality and how formulate it? Or, again, consider the mystical and related experiences of Man's oneness with some vaster reality. Are we, as has been said, raindrops that get lost in the sea? Verily we are raindrops that can be conscious of oneness with the vaster reality—water! Or we may say that it is the oxygen constituent of the rain-drop, conscious of oneness with all else into which oxygen enters—both water and air. Mystical and other experiences might suggest that in some sense Man's soul was omnipresent, *Tat tvam asi*; but neither Pantheism—nor Pananthropism—if I dare use the word—prove satisfactory.

If we ask, is the Deity omnipresent, is He—in some sense—under, within, or behind the *physical* Universe, Comparative Religion will tell us of rites and prayers whereby men all the world over can come to feel the nearness or presence of a supersensuous Personal Reality. But as we pursue our enquiry we land ourselves in hopelessly pantheistic, obscurantist and materialistic positions until we recall the utterance: "wherever I am, I am in the presence of God." This and not the idea of Divine Omnipresence proves the more helpful line of thought, not only for the progress of Religion, but for the higher development of the human mind and all that turns thereon. So, like the Nomad of old, Man can, as it were, carry his God with him; and not for nothing did the religion of Israel have a nomadic ancestry. Yet from time to time men need a Jeremiah (ch. xxix) to tell them that even in exile, away from the local centre of their religion, their temple, and their land, they are not removed from the Divine Presence.²⁸

In our quest after Reality we follow old and well-tried usage when we make Personality Divine and Human our highest category. This is my ninth point, and I need hardly quote modern Jewish writers on the idea of the Deity as personal, though not of course corporeal or material.²⁹ Anthropomorphism has its obvious and recognised dangers; it is helpful to think of the Deity as Father—once in Israel it was as husband—but to pursue our thinking along the line of human relationships, is—to say the least—to attempt to understand the higher from the lower. Yet this "personalizing"—if I may use the term—has endless possibilities, because of the transcendent Ego, the Self, and the transcendent God and His Universe. Indeed, we can trace from very early times the tendency to think of God in terms of mind and to utilize the knowledge of the Mind and of Mental processes.³⁰ So, it is now suggested that the Deity realizes himself in His Universe, as does a man, a Shakespeare, in his creative work. Or, if we

²⁸ On that remarkable chapter of Jeremiah, I refer in particular to JOHN SKINNER, *Prophecy and Religion* (1922), pp. 285-297.

²⁹ E.g., MONTEFIORE, *loc. cit.*; ABELSON, p. 288; ABRAHAMS, *Studies*, ii. 149. By a "personal" God is naturally meant, in the first instance, One whose relationship to man is experienced in a way that cannot be otherwise expressed, although the *quality* of the Divine "Person" rests upon the moral and spiritual development of the individual.

³⁰ Not only in the "Logos" and the earlier Biblical "Word of the Lord," but in Babylonia, Persia, and elsewhere.

recall the utterance already quoted, we may say that, though we are not omnipresent in all the contents of our mind, they can be in our presence; and whereas we dismiss those thoughts that do not serve our purpose, we, if we are as God's thoughts, may haply be of use for His Ultimate purpose. Or again, when we think of Transcendence and Immanence—terms that prove to be absolutely necessary when we study men's ideas of God—are not we at one time outside and above our thoughts, and at another time inevitably living and incarnate in them?

Herein lies the possibility of great developments of knowledge, for if—on the Theory of Religion—we consider the relationship between God and Man, we, when we think of Him in terms of mind, are deepening our knowledge of the human mind, and so, in turn, acquire better instruments of thought for thinking out the ultimate problems of life.

But while I venture to think that along these lines there will be profound advances in the future, Old Testament realism will forbid us to think of the Universe as Mind, or to reduce everything to Mind-stuff. Though it has seemed helpful to think of the Universe as a system of minds embraced in one supreme Mind, a system of Persons or Selves, in one Supreme Personality, seems to be a more fruitful conception. Yet, whenever we attempt to explain the interaction of Persons some theory of Monads is required, we need some connecting agency, substance, or other ground of our interrelations. We may be firmly convinced that A can pray on behalf of B, but here God is the medium, and to the religious soul this is all-sufficing; but once we leave our belief in this Ultimate Reality we seem to need what one might call a Psychical or Spiritual *Ether* to explain all action at a distance.

My next point, the tenth, is that though the Ultimate Reality transcends us, the prophets' conceptions of ethical righteousness here open out most suggestive lines of enquiry.

The prophets laid greatest stress, not upon cult but upon conduct; cultus without conduct is empty, but righteous conduct—to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly—brings a man into relationship with God. This relationship with the Ultimate Reality does not necessarily come through the sacrificial system, or the ceremonial transition from some secular state of every-day life to a special holy or sacred psychic state, but through right living. Here there is no substratum, medium or "spiritual ether"; but the object of Man's quest is in some sense already and unconsciously attained by what is essentially parallelism or imitation—the adherence to certain ideal modes of behaviour.

Many will know the fine essay on the "Imitation of God," by ISRAEL ABRAHAMS,⁸¹ and, of the numerous utterances that might be mentioned here, one of the most striking is, perhaps, Meister Eckhart's "If I am pure God must of His own nature give Himself to me." With the right mode of life—with the right wave-length, so to say—Man is not far from God; and this fundamental belief, expressed in many different ways, is of the first importance for all conceptions of Religion and Reality. It is part of an immense topic. It is hardly necessary to refer to sympathy as a road to understanding and knowledge, to

⁸¹ *Studies in Pharisaism*, vol. ii.

imitation as a means of acquiring certain attitudes, or to the conviction of the necessity of imitation of or adherence to a cosmic or divine norm or law. Although the psychical states of religion and mysticism—of the “numinous” in general—are overpoweringly impressive and vital for a man’s stability, right living—even if a man has no evident sense of “Religion”—is more essential for Ultimate Reality than religion that is lacking in righteousness: at least if we take our stand on Ethical Monotheism.

The prophets’ insistence upon social conduct is characteristic of the religious realism and practical mysticism of Israel. Her “this-world”-liness and her ennoblement of the body stand in contrast to Greek dualism of body and soul on the one side and, on the other, to an ultra-spirituality which runs grave risk of being empty verbiage. Prof. Wheeler Robinson has recently commented upon the drift away from dualism to a unity of spirit and matter, from the Greek ideal of an incarnate soul to the Hebrew emphasis on the bodily organism as a physical and psychical unit.³² It is only one of other indications that we must go back, not merely to the foundation of Christendom in the New Testament, but to the practical spiritual idealism of the Old Testament.

My eleventh point arises out of the religious realism of Israel. Contrast the realism and virility of old Israelite life at its best with Indian pantheism, quietism and mysticism: *Tat tvam asi*, the Soul of Man and the Soul of the Universe are ultimately one! All that comes in between is Maya, illusion, unreality. Whereas Maya denies this world of space and time, the Israelite, like the rest of the Semites, accepted the world and lived in it an intense life, with his ideals of Righteousness; while the West, far less emotional, by immersing itself in the world of sense-data, has gained its knowledge of the mysteries of Human Nature and of the Universe. It is a knowledge not to be lightly valued or allowed to remain stationary, since, on the Theory of Religion, it is a knowledge of God’s Universe which is *our* Universe through the relationship between God and Man, and increasing knowledge only gives us profounder insight into His ways and our own heritage.

Now the Indian Maya, or illusion, comes in between the Soul of Man and the Ultimate Reality, and comprises the subject-matter of our sciences. It includes not merely the physical universe but Thought itself; for our thoughts are not so much the constituents of Reality, as guides to the apprehension and interpretation of it. Far from infallible, our thoughts, ideas and mental processes are simply our “human” tools, and it is impossible to conceive the nature of the processes of thought in another existence, after death, without our sense-organs. The world of thought as well as the world of the scientist are as a sea which both joins us to Reality and severs us from it; but it is a sea which is slowly and laboriously being charted.

Here we may recall what Mr. Smuts was saying at one of the recent meetings of the British Association. It was to the effect that in the evolution of the Universe we seem to pass from one level to another, each with its own concepts, its own laws and principles, but all bound together as members of a genetic

³² PEAKE, *The People and the Book*, pp. 380 *sqq*; cf. also TENNANT *op. cit.* ii. 259: “Man and the world form an organic whose whole ground is God.”

series.⁸³ In the world of life, in the world of thought, in the evolution of the Universe, and in that not less vital ideological evolution of religious and other thought which has now made us conscious of the past, and not a little apprehensive of the future—here, as it seems to me, is a great field for further and fresher research. For the different processes, though on different levels, are, or seem to be, inter-related, and they have, or seem to have, as Mr. Smuts said, “a fundamental unity of plan or organisation.” On this view it would be futile to attempt to reduce everything to Mind or to Matter. The sounder and simpler method would be to start from the known—the range or hierarchy of processes from the physical to the biological, the mental and the ideological. From a comparative study of *all*—and not as is usual from a few only of them—it is not too optimistic to hope that much more may be learnt of Man’s place in his Universe.⁸⁴

One of the necessary tasks will be to reconsider our most important concepts, to unpack them, so to say, and pack them anew.⁸⁵ Thus, if we take a long view of the history of thought, it is not at all obvious that our terms “spirit” and “matter” have been finally fixed.⁸⁶ Certainly there is much that has been seemingly “religious” but had no “spiritual” worth; on the other hand, religious ideas that are enwrapped in ritual or ceremonial are not as such “materialistic.” If by the term “God” we mean the Ultimate Spiritual Reality, we must admit that although a given religion has been life-giving and inspiring, it has not rarely assumed forms that are static, ossified or dead. These have come between Man and newer and deeper conceptions of his Creator, and being as lifeless as dead matter have shown that there can be a sort of “Materialism” in religion which has proved more subtle and destructive than Materialism of any other type.

Next, it is necessary to reconsider the application of the terms Nature and Natural. To the religious individual, and in supreme degree to such personalities as the prophets of old, what we should call the “Supernatural” was “Natural,” in that God was a natural or integral part of the Universe. Whereas from one point of view we contrast the Natural and Supernatural, there is another and higher conception of the Natural which includes our Supernatural. But, if we widen our view and take into account bad religion, foolish mysticism, occultism, and the rest, it is by no means the case that such “Supernatural” is necessarily of any lofty spiritual or other value. Moreover, approaching the terms from another and purely non-religious standpoint, we must be prepared to enlarge

⁸³ *Nature*, Sept. 26th, 1931, p. 527, col. 2; cf. p. 523, col. 1.

⁸⁴ Cf. the suggestive “Herbert Spencer” Lecture by DR. C. S. MYERS, *Psychological Conceptions in other Sciences* (Oxford, 1929), e.g., p. 23, on the employment of the phenomena of Mind to throw light upon the phenomena of Matter.

⁸⁵ When one considers how concepts are articulated from impressions, sense-data, ideas, and so on and so forth, and how these combine to form a fairly compact unit, the process that unifies them is—so it may be suggested—not unrelated to the processes which make organic bodies of thought, a body of people, a species and many other sorts of “units.”

⁸⁶ See, for some preliminary remarks, the writer’s note in W. R. SMITH, *Rel. of the Semites*, 3rd ed., pp. 676-686. From the old point of view, “spiritual” was that which the Divine Spirit informed (see especially, Isaiah xxxi. 3); the common tendency to divorce the “spiritual” from practical work-a-day affairs often makes it verge upon the merely verbal.

the realm of the Natural to include telepathy, second sight, and any other psychical phenomena from civilised and uncivilised lands that may be capable of verification. Certainly, proceeding in this way, we seem to open our doors too widely and to aggravate our difficulties, but a careful study of Comparative Religion demands that we should find room for many embarrassing data. It may seem sufficient merely to tabulate the phenomena; but once we attempt to evaluate them, Ethical Monotheism must prove our criterion.

Ethical Monotheism recognises as its only supersensuous and spiritual reality God, and all that "God" means for human experience and cosmic activity. As a progressive religion it can find no place in its scheme of Reality for the merely supersensuous or the merely supernatural as such. It cannot treat that realm *apart from God* as "Real"; though this is not to deny that the phenomena may be genuine. We may perhaps illustrate our meaning thus: Music and Art of all kinds abound, but there are ideals of Music and Art, and of Science, Literature, and so forth. We may deplore or repudiate what is bad, we may often be neutral, and frequently we may misjudge. But, if we are concerned with what seems to lead us to our goal, we follow our ideals and believe that any good wheat among the tares which we are rejecting will not fail in due course to make itself manifest. In other words, so long as Ethical Monotheism is our starting-point and our criterion, this Ultimate Reality will be our guide when we are confronted with the problem of the existence of the Supernatural and the Supersensuous. And so it is that, in the words of Matthew Arnold, God, the Ultimate Reality, is "the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness."³⁷

Finally, we may notice that the deep feeling for what we call "Nature" marks the Old Testament rather than the New, and that it is the first great step to Science.³⁸ The Israelite conception of Divine Righteousness meant that God was dependable throughout all His activities; and such a conviction has assisted, however unconsciously, the growth of the scientific outlook. The Deity was not a capricious personality (Numbers xxiii. 19), and although there were times when the God of Israel appeared remote, or even hostile, Israel came back to her doctrine of His eternal righteousness.

This is my last point. The Power in or behind the Universe is not arbitrary, and inasmuch as this conviction has repeatedly prevailed in many different forms, we may ask how far it is supposed that this dependableness, this "righteousness," extends. Can it be merely an emotional conviction with no further meaning? In ordinary life we trust our reasoning processes but we test them. If our working-hypotheses or regulative principles break down, chaos, chance or indeterminateness seem to prevail, although it is a matter of common experience that in due course we find a more developed hypothesis or law or principle

³⁷ *Literature and Dogma*, chap. x., section 3 (beginning). The closer study of all that is involved in the conception of Righteousness, or Rightness, brings to light much that is of the greatest significance for our ideas of Man and the Universe. See the writer's note in W. R. SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, 3rd ed., pp. 655-671, also *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Relig.*, ix. 314 sqq., *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, 1928, pp. 204 sqq.

³⁸ As distinct from early special developments of positive knowledge—notably medicine (CHARLES SINGER, in *Nature*, 4th July, 1931, p. 8 sq.)—the differentiation of thought which allowed the continuous development of enquiry into Man (ethics) and the Universe apart from Man may perhaps be dated round about the viiith cent. B.C.

which not infrequently covers a larger field of action. Of this there are outstanding illustrations. Now, whereas in Israel the belief in God appears to have broken down in and about the exile (*cf. e.g. Zeph. i. 12*), the writings of the Deutero-Isaiah (*Isaiah xl. sqq.*) show convincingly that profoundly vaster conceptions arose—precisely as often happens in research.³⁹ But what ensued was more than a solely “religious” development, since step by step we pass on to new stages in universal history wherein the newly-reconstructed Israel laid the world under its debt.

To the Israelite Divine Righteousness would manifest itself over an extensive sphere of activity because his thought was not so highly differentiated as ours. It would be apparent in processes some of which Man has discovered for himself and has built into his conception of the physical universe, his Science. But, although positive knowledge constantly seems to be enriched at the expense of Religion, it is necessary to bear in mind how the concept of “Nature” has arisen by abstraction, and that Man himself, only “a little lower than the angels,” seems to be in some relationship with the Divine Reality. Moreover, if we believe that Divine Righteousness rules throughout, we have the highest type of Law, Order and Determinateness, a Rule which Man ever and again recognizes to be Righteous. Indeed, the repeated spontaneous recognition that the Ultimate Reality is Righteous is but further evidence of the fundamental relationship which Man feels between himself and that Power to which he gives the name “God.”

One has only to glance over the data of Religion to observe the extraordinary extent to which the belief has prevailed that the Universe—so far as it was known—is sustained by man as well as gods. Man has felt it his duty to uphold the Right, to maintain Order and Justice, and even to help to sustain the gods themselves. What the gods—what God—really requires of Man forms one of the most terrible, and yet one of the most wonderful, chapters of Comparative Religion. Surely no sacrifice can be too precious, no offering too worthy, and yet (*Micah vi. 8*)—“what does God require. . . ?” Especially in the more rudimentary religions does there run the idea that if Man does his duty Nature will do hers: Man and Nature—so far as understood—form a whole, one Law, one Order, rules throughout.⁴⁰ While it may be said that Nature, as such, is marked by a certain conformity to type, Man is constantly realising the sort of type to which he must be true, the Rightness at which he must aim, the norm to which he must adhere.

Truth to Self is surely, then, the highest principle of life. In the long history of Religion one sees that there have been decisive advances from lower forms to which one cannot return with impunity. But they have played a profoundly essential rôle. Everywhere, too, in our lives we see how much preparatory work has been done which, though inferior and of temporary value, has paved the way for what we hope may be of higher value and more lasting. So, one cannot but believe that in the effort to be true to oneself, to one’s ideals

³⁹ The importance of the vith cent. B.C. for the history of religion, and not in the Old Testament alone, cannot be too emphatically insisted.

⁴⁰ Although human laws are said to be “man-made,” they depend upon some *consciousness* of the behaviour that is necessary if there is to be Social Order.

of Righteousness—whether one be sceptic, agnostic or atheist, whether saint or mystic—one is always finding anew the Self to which to be true. And “the conclusion of the whole matter” is that to be true to Self is to be true to the Ultimate Reality which is Man’s quest. Adherence to one’s highest ideals becomes the *Imitatio Dei*. When it is said that “all men are equal in the sight of God,” what is meant is not, from the *human* side, the equal opportunity for all men to work out their highest aims, but rather that they are equal each man relatively to his highest Self and in his relationship to God and His Universe.

The Comparative Study of Religions is, I am persuaded, contributing to some new stage in the history of Religion; and just as Religion has led to Philosophy, in the development of the great historic religions, so Comparative Religion may lead to some new stage in philosophical and other thought.⁴¹ It is one thing to collect and classify the data of Religion, but to order them and follow out their implications involves a theoretical treatment which cannot ignore the religions which we consider the highest. Only along the lines I have proceeded do I feel able to handle the data and, rightly or wrongly, I feel that what I have called the “Theory of Religion” satisfies the test of the best theory, which is not so much the mere number of facts it answers, but the way it answers rival theories. It seems to me to bring out more clearly the essential problems, not only of Religion, but also of the relation between the religious and non-religious spheres or aspects of Life and Thought.

The “Theory of Religion” involves the unsuspected influence of our cosmic or theistic relationship upon all our deeper thinking. Man as organic with Nature, Man as son of a Divine Father—here are diverse modes of thinking; and while men feel that they have contact with Divine Reality in certain religious or mystical states or ceremonies, they are not remote from the Divine Presence in normal, daily, righteous living to the best of their powers. But that is only if we may follow the prophets of Israel and if we may make some tremendous assumptions!

In these pages I have gone back to the Old Testament—though I do not stop there—and I have assumed, not only that there *is* something in Religion, but that the spiritual religion of the Bible, which has its foundation in the Old Testament, gives us a sure starting-point and a criterion. Great assumptions! Yet many of us stake everything upon such assumptions, and find their faith sufficiently endorsed to justify their patience and steadfastness amid the “facts” which seem to refute their “theory.” Though much is obscure, and we see darkly, we do get enough light to guide us, though not enough to prevent even grave errors. And so we work on, until, in the closing words of the Seventeenth Psalm:

‘As for me, let me behold Thy face in righteousness;
May I be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy form.’”

⁴¹ COMTE’S “Law of the Three States” contains important elements of truth which, however, seem to need restatement.